

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A print management system that allocates each print demand to one of multiple printing devices, which print an image on a medium like printing paper, said print management system
5 comprising:

a print demand acceptance module that receives a print demand including at least one image printing request; and

a print allocation module that, when the received print demand includes plural printing requests for printing an at
10 least partially identical image plural times, allocates the plural printing requests for printing the at least partially identical image plural times to one identical printing device.

2. A print management system in accordance with claim 1, wherein each of the printing requests included in the print
15 demand has identification information for identifying an image to be printed, and

said print allocation module allocates multiple printing requests for printing at least an image having an identical piece of the identification information to one identical
20 printing device.

3. A print management system in accordance with claim 2, wherein the identification information includes at least one of a file name of each image, identification information

for identifying a digital camera used to record the image, date of recording the image with the digital camera, and a data size of the image.

4. A print management system in accordance with claim
5 1, said print management system further comprising:

a printing request number detection module that detects a number of printing requests allocated to each of the multiple printing devices,

wherein each of the multiple printing devices accepts
10 allocation of printing requests from said print management system to a preset number and successively executes the preset number of printing requests, and

said print allocation module allocates a printing request on the condition that any of the detected numbers of
15 printing requests allocated to the multiple printing devices is less than the preset number.

5. A print management system in accordance with claim 4, wherein said print allocation module, when there are plural printing devices having the number of allocated printing
20 requests less than the preset number, allocates a printing request to the printing device having a less number of allocated printing requests.

6. A print management system that allocates each print

demand to one of multiple printing devices, which print an image on a medium like printing paper, said print management system comprising:

a print demand acceptance module that receives a print
5 demand; and

a print allocation module that, when the received print demand includes a printing request for printing an at least partially identical image with an allocated image of another printing request, which has already been allocated to any of
10 the multiple printing devices, allocates the printing request for printing the at least partially identical image to a relevant printing device, to which the printing request for printing the allocated image has already been allocated.

7. A print management system in accordance with claim
15 6, wherein each of the printing requests included in the print demand has image identification information for identifying an image to be printed,

said print management system further comprising: an information storage module that stores the image
20 identification information for identifying the allocated image and the relevant printing device, to which the printing request for printing the allocated image has already been allocated,

wherein said print allocation module allocates a

printing request for printing an image having an identical piece of the image identification information with the stored image identification information for identifying the allocated image to the stored relevant printing device, to which the
5 printing request for printing the allocated image has already been allocated.

8. A print management system in accordance with claim 7, wherein the identification information includes at least one of a file name of each image, identification information
10 for identifying a digital camera used to record the image, date of recording the image with the digital camera, and a data size of the image.

9. A print management system in accordance with claim 8, wherein each of the printing requests included in the print
15 demand has customer identification information for identifying a customer who demands printing of an image,

said information storage module stores the customer identification information with regard to the allocated image,
and

20 said print allocation module allocates a printing request for printing an image having an identical piece of the image identification information with the stored image identification information for identifying the allocated image

and an identical piece of the customer identification information with the stored customer identification information with regard to the allocated image to the stored relevant printing device, to which the printing request for
5 printing the allocated image has already been allocated.

10. A print management system in accordance with claim 6, said print management system further comprising:

a printing request number detection module that detects a number of printing requests allocated to each of the multiple
10 printing devices,

wherein each of the multiple printing devices accepts allocation of printing requests from said print management system to a preset number and successively executes the preset number of printing requests, and

15 said print allocation module allocates a printing request on the condition that any of the detected numbers of printing requests allocated to the multiple printing devices is less than the preset number.

11. A print management system in accordance with claim
20 10, wherein said print allocation module, when there are plural printing devices having the number of allocated printing requests less than the preset number, allocates a printing request to the printing device having a less number of allocated

printing requests.

12. A print management system that allocates each print demand to one of multiple printing devices, which print an image on a medium like printing paper, said print management system
5 comprising:

a print demand acceptance module that receives a print demand including at least one image printing request with settings of a number of pages and number of copies to be printed; and

10 a print allocation module that allocates the received print demand as a whole or in units of pages to one of the multiple printing devices.

13. A print management system in accordance with claim 12, said print management system further comprising:

15 a printing request number detection module that detects a number of printing requests allocated to each of the multiple printing devices,

wherein each of the multiple printing devices accepts allocation of printing requests from said print management
20 system to a preset number and successively executes the preset number of printing requests, and

said print allocation module allocates a printing request on the condition that any of the detected numbers of

printing requests allocated to the multiple printing devices is less than the preset number.

14. A print management system in accordance with claim 13, wherein said print allocation module, when there are plural
5 printing devices having the number of allocated printing requests less than the preset number, allocates a printing request to the printing device having a less number of allocated printing requests.

15. A print management method that allocates each print
10 demand to one of multiple printing devices, which print an image on a medium like printing paper, said print management method comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving a print demand including at least one image printing request; and

15 (b) when the received print demand includes plural printing requests for printing an at least partially identical image plural times, allocating the plural printing requests for printing the at least partially identical image plural times to one identical printing device.

20 16. A print management method in accordance with claim 15, wherein each of the printing requests included in the print demand has identification information for identifying an image to be printed, and

said step (b) allocates multiple printing requests for printing at least an image having an identical piece of the identification information to one identical printing device.

17. A print management method in accordance with claim
5 15, said print management method further comprising the step of:

(c) detecting a number of printing requests allocated to each of the multiple printing devices,

wherein each of the multiple printing devices accepts
10 allocation of printing requests from said print management system to a preset number and successively executes the preset number of printing requests, and

said step (b) allocates a printing request on the condition that any of the detected numbers of printing requests
15 allocated to the multiple printing devices is less than the preset number.

18. A print management method that allocates each print demand to one of multiple printing devices, which print an image on a medium like printing paper, said print management method
20 comprising the steps of:

(a) receiving a print demand; and

(b) when the received print demand includes a printing request for printing an at least partially identical image with

an allocated image of another printing request, which has already been allocated to any of the multiple printing devices, allocating the printing request for printing the at least partially identical image to a relevant printing device, to
5 which the printing request for printing the allocated image has already been allocated.

19. A print management method in accordance with claim 18, wherein each of the printing requests included in the print demand has image identification information for identifying
10 an image to be printed,

said print management method further comprising the step of:

(c) storing the image identification information for identifying the allocated image and the relevant printing
15 device, to which the printing request for printing the allocated image has already been allocated, into an information storage module,

wherein said step (b) allocates a printing request for printing an image having an identical piece of the image
20 identification information with the stored image identification information for identifying the allocated image to the stored relevant printing device, to which the printing request for printing the allocated image has already been

allocated.

20. A print management method in accordance with claim 18, said print management method further comprising the step of:

5 (d) detecting a number of printing requests allocated to each of the multiple printing devices,

wherein each of the multiple printing devices accepts allocation of printing requests from said print management system to a preset number and successively executes the preset
10 number of printing requests, and

said step (b) allocates a printing request on the condition that any of the detected numbers of printing requests allocated to the multiple printing devices is less than the preset number.

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